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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [KCIP](#) [KISL](#) [KU](#) [RS](#) [XG](#)

SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF RECENT NATO-KUWAIT ENGAGEMENT

REF: A. 07 KUWAIT 0870

[1](#)B. 07 KUWAIT 0440

[1](#)C. 06 KUWAIT 4652

[1](#)D. 06 KUWAIT 4557

Classified By: DCM Alan G. Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On April 9, the Polish Embassy delivered a briefing to NATO member-country COMs on recent NATO-Kuwait engagement. On January 14-15, a team of NATO experts visited Kuwait to identify GOK security priorities and investigate areas for increased cooperation. On March 27, Kuwait hosted a NATO Special Committee Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) seminar to review threats to Kuwait's energy infrastructure, strategies for countering cyber attacks, overall gulf security and regional Islamic moderation programs. During the ICI seminar, National Security Bureau Deputy Shaykh Thamer discussed the GCC's proposed atomic energy program and reiterated Iran's growing danger to the region. Kuwait has not yet implemented an agreement to share classified information with NATO, and a transit agreement for shipping military materiel is stalled indefinitely. The recently concluded Bucharest Summit underscored NATO regional priorities, but also highlighted Russia's growing unease with NATO's eastward expansion. End summary.

Jan 14-15 NATO Experts Visit  
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[1](#)2. (C) A team of NATO experts visited Kuwait on January 14-15 to identify GOK security priorities and investigate areas for increased cooperation. Members of the Kuwait Ministry of Interior (MOI), Ministry of Defense (MOD), Kuwait National Guard (KNG), National Security Bureau (NSB) and Fire Department attended the meetings. The GOK identified border security, counterterrorism, WMD non-proliferation and civil emergency planning as areas of mutual interest.

[1](#)3. (SBU) NATO also advocated for greater Kuwaiti participation in the ICI, and presented the GOK with an ICI Menu of Practical Activities for 2008. The NATO experts announced the launch of the E-Prime data network, which allows NATO partners to review the ICI activities menu online. At the conclusion of the meetings, both sides highlighted qualitative and quantitative growth in their cooperation, specifically noting Kuwait's nomination of a liaison officer to the NATO Partnership Cooperation Cell in Mons, Belgium.

March 27 ICI Seminar in Kuwait  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) On March 27, Kuwait hosted a NATO Special Committee

ICI seminar, which included representatives from the Kuwait MOD, MOI, NSB and the Ministry of Awqaf (religious endowments) and Islamic Affairs; as well as members of the Bahraini, Qatari and Emirati security establishment. NATO Special Committee members from 11 European nations, in addition to delegates from the NATO Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit and the NATO Office of Security also attended. The seminar reviewed threats to Kuwait's energy infrastructure, strategies for countering cyber attacks, overall gulf security and regional Islamic moderation programs. NATO representatives highlighted recent cyber attacks on Estonia emanating from Russia during the cyber security portion of the seminar.

#### NSB on Nuclear Energy, Iran and Islamic Moderation

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15. (C) During the ICI seminar, NSB Deputy Director Shaykh Thamer Ali Al Sabah delivered a presentation outlining GOK regional security views. Shaykh Thamer welcomed NATO assistance and called for intensified mutual dialogue. He advised that the GCC intends to develop its own nuclear energy program, but assured the NATO representatives that it would be a strictly peaceful endeavor conducted with full and transparent disclosure to the IAEA and the UN.

16. (C) In contrast, Shaykh Thamer said the GCC views Iran's foreign policy and its nuclear program as threats to regional stability. Thamer discussed the growth of Iran's regional influence, particularly in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, and reiterated that Iran has threatened to attack U.S. and European interests in the Gulf. He noted that Iran does not possess advanced military technologies, but cautioned that its current forces were sufficient to

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disrupt maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. Shaykh Thamer stressed that Kuwait seeks to isolate Iran internationally, and that it backs the leading role of the UN and the IAEA in addressing Iran's nuclear program. He counseled NATO to "take GCC advice" to "avoid mistakes" in dealing with Iran.

17. (C) Speaking about Kuwait's Islamic moderation program, Shaykh Thamer said the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs had conducted moderation training for 720 imams thus far. He also highlighted the World Moderation Center's international conferences, courses and expert exchanges as evidence of its global reach and success. (Note: Kuwait's moderation initiative is essentially a marketing program for Western consumption, as evidenced by its conferences in London, Washington and Moscow. The program does not require imams to take moderation training, nor does it attempt to rehabilitate extremists. End note.)

#### Status of NATO-Kuwait Agreements

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18. (C) NATO is pursuing an Information Security Agreement with Kuwait that will allow for the exchange of classified information. The GOK signed the agreement on December 12, 2006, but has not yet implemented the requisite security measures. A team of NATO experts will visit Kuwait in May to inspect its equipment and offer advice on next steps. NATO expects the information exchanges to begin before July 2008.

19. (C) In addition, NATO is attempting to finalize a Transit Agreement that will facilitate the shipment of military materiel through Kuwait to Iraq and Afghanistan. While the absence of such an agreement has not prevented this, the lack of established protocols has resulted in some unnecessary delays. The GOK noted that this accord would need to be approved by the National Assembly, but assured NATO representatives that "there is no real controversy with this agreement."

¶10. (C) Note: The Amir dissolved the National Assembly on March 19, and new elections are scheduled for May 17. The dissolution was partly a response to Parliament's inability to pass substantive legislation. The UK previously circumvented this problem by signing a bilateral MOU with the GOK, which the Amir approved by decree. The British Ambassador did not specify whether this occurred during the last parliamentary dissolution in 2006. The U.S. and U.K. have also signed bilateral agreements to pass intelligence to Kuwait. End note.

#### Recap of Bucharest Summit

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¶11. (C) The Polish Embassy recapped the April 2-4 NATO Bucharest Summit and outlined NATO's top priorities for the Gulf, namely:

- Continued support for the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (now comprising 40 nations)
- Continued support for the Government and people of Iraq
- Continued development of the Iraq Security Forces
- An extension of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq through 2009
- Enhanced Iraqi Navy and Air Force leadership training, police training, border security and counterterrorism initiatives, and defense reform.

¶12. (C) During the summit, NATO encouraged new countries to join the ICI, specifically Saudi Arabia and Oman, and announced its desire to build liaison arrangements on a voluntary basis with "the region." The Austrian Ambassador noted during the briefing, however, that the KSA was having difficulty selling ICI membership to its public, and that Oman was balking since Sultan Qaboos is reportedly not convinced of the magnitude of the Iranian threat and is weary of joining the "anti-Iran" camp.

¶13. (C) During the briefing, Romanian Ambassador Constantin Nistor discussed Russian President Vladimir Putin's participation in the summit. He said Putin expressed Russia's readiness to talk with NATO on membership expansion, noting that Russia was "beyond the Cold War" and that it was not interested in revisiting that era. AMB Nistor relayed that the GOR had apparently warmed to the Europe Missile Shield, with the caveat that the control foci be located in

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both Belgium and Russia.

¶14. (C) The Ambassador cautioned, however, that Russia viewed continued NATO expansion as a threat to its security and that Georgian and Ukrainian membership would be "very difficult for Russia to accept." AMB Nistor speculated that Ukraine may be split should it opt to join NATO. He recommended that NATO continue its close engagement with Russia and observed that Russian buy-in was critical to resolving a host of international problems.

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